



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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Today is the first day of hurricane season 2010

Public is urged to be mindful of animals in their emergency preparations

According to the National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center, a busy Atlantic hurricane season is expected. The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) is urging everyone to take stock of their emergency plans to make sure that they are prepared to ensure the safety of themselves, their families, and the animals (pets, livestock, and poultry) entrusted to their care. Animal emergency response in Delaware is led by Delaware Animal Response (DAR) staff in DDA. DAR directs and coordinates animal response/evacuation activities with two primary animal response agencies, the Kent County SPCA and the Delaware SPCA. Elainea Goldthwaite, DAR coordinator says, "Depending upon the severity of a storm and other mitigating conditions, animal owners may shelter in place or may evacuate. The public should be aware of the following recommendations."

DAR recommendations for pets before emergency or disaster strikes:

In the past, if an evacuation was recommended, people had to go to a "traditional" human shelter and could not bring their pets. Many people chose to remain at home with their pets rather than abandon them. Human and animal lives were lost as a consequence. Delaware, through DAR, has changed this by accepting the "Community" Shelter approach, i.e., co-locating human and pet shelters:

- If an evacuation is ordered, provisions for pets will be made.
- Pet shelters will be sheltered in close proximity to human shelters
 - Owners will be encouraged to visit regularly and even assist in the day to day care of their pets
 - Pets and owners will be less stressed, healthier and happier
 - Owners will see that their pets are safe
 - More people will evacuate and not stay behind in emergencies, thus more human and animal lives will potentially be saved.
- Be sure your pet is up to date on all vaccinations as recommended by your veterinarian.
- Prepare an animal disaster kit that contains the following stored in a waterproof container:
 - Medical records, vaccination history, and medications
 - Current photographs
 - Veterinarian phone number
 - Documentation of any behavior problems
 - Alternate contact information
 - First aid kit
 - Leashes, collars, or harnesses (extra sturdy), and muzzle (if necessary) with identification tags
 - A pet carrier for each animal
 - Food and water bowls, litter pan for cats
 - Food and water for at least 7 days, can opener
 - Toys, blanket
- Make sure you have a plan on where to take your pets should you be asked to evacuate.
 - Contact DAR to determine where the DAR co-located pet shelters are.
 - Have a list of other places where you can evacuate with your pet (relatives, pet friendly motels, pet shelters, etc.) should conditions require you to evacuate.

-MORE-

DAR recommendations for livestock owners before emergency or disaster strikes;

- Make sure livestock are current on their vaccinations
- Check and secure all buildings and enclosures for loose boards, doors, window covers, tin sheeting, wire, and equipment that may blow around in high winds and injure livestock
- Do not let animals become trapped in low-lying pens or unsafe structures.
- Mark animals with an identifier so they can be returned to you if lost. Identifiers may include ear tags with the name of farm and/or phone numbers, brands, paint markings on hooves or coat, or clipped initials in the hair.
- Have enough food and water on-hand for 7 days in accessible locations.
- Move feed to higher ground to prevent moisture and mold contamination.
- Stock up on basic veterinary supplies.
- Conditions may warrant having the animals weather the storm outside to avoid the danger of structure collapse:
 - Survey your property to find the best location to confine your animals in each type of disaster.
 - Area should be a minimum of 1 acre to provide animals space to move around to avoid blowing debris
 - Area should have no overhead power lines or poles
 - Check for or provide alternate water sources in case power is lost and pumps and automatic waterers are not working after the disaster.
 - Make sure food is accessible
- If you decide to evacuate your livestock, determine several locations the animals could be taken, several routes to these locations and the entry requirements for each. Make arrangements in advance with the owner/operators to accept your animals and be sure to contact them before taking the animals there. Locations that could be used for evacuation are private stables, race tracks, fair grounds, equestrian centers, private farms and humane societies.
- **For more information on emergency preparedness for pets, livestock, and poultry:**
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Recommendations for commercial poultry growers from the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.

- Make sure you check your back-up generator. Have adequate fuel for several days of operations. Make sure automatic starting systems are ready to go.
- If you have no electricity whatsoever, monitor house conditions more frequently and make adjustments as needed.
- Make sure you have adequate propane gas and arrange an earlier than normal delivery if necessary.
- Check your feed inventory and notify your poultry company if you believe a delivery will be needed before the next normal delivery.
- If strong winds knock down trees, make your farm lanes and houses accessible to delivery vehicles.
- Secure outside objects so they don't blow and cause damage.
- Make sure cell phones are fully charged in case land-line telephone service is lost.
- Check security of roofing materials, chicken house siding, and windows/doors to make sure they will not blow off or blow open. Corners and edges of buildings are particularly vulnerable.
- Make plans for larger than normal carcass disposal. Consider in-house composting if practical.
- Be prepared to keep birds longer than normal in case processing plants are unable to operate.
- **For more information: Bill Satterfield, Executive Director of the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.:**
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